

HOME HEATING COSTS

Three out of four Americans say they are already living paycheck to paycheck.

And it is no wonder: median household income is lower today than it was in 2000, yet expenses like home utility bills are up, consuming more of a middle class household's income than they did a decade ago.

Add in a cold winter -- like the one so much of the country is experiencing -- and it gets even harder for working middle class families to make ends meet. Of course higher bills are especially problematic for low-income families who already spend over 12% of their household budget on energy costs (home and vehicle).

Policies out of Washington that unnecessarily restrict domestic energy production and make it harder to construct the infrastructure necessary to reliably and cheaply deliver energy to American consumers only adds to the costs.

House Republicans believe we have an obligation to fix these policies and reduce the squeeze on working families. And that is exactly what we are doing the week of March 3rd. Read on to see how House Republicans common sense solutions will help you and your family.

Natural Gas Heat

About half of American households heat their home with natural gas. If this includes your family, you know that prices are up by as much as 45% this year. One problem keeping prices higher is the lack of infrastructure to effectively move natural gas from new found production to where it is most needed. An additional emerging problem is proposed EPA regulation on coal power plants which could cause electricity plants to convert from coal to natural gas, thus increasing demand and costs. House Republicans will tackle both problems.

- Last November the House passed the bipartisan Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act to expedite construction of pipelines to make sure natural gas gets where it is most needed.
- The week of March 3rd, the House will pass the Responsibly and Professional Invigorating Development (RAPID) Act to expedite federal approval of construction projects, including energy and natural gas infrastructure. Federal permitting requirements and environmental regulations, and the related litigation, can add years to the process for licensing and constructing new power plants, whether nuclear, coal, natural gas or even renewables, which just means higher prices for middle class families.
- The House will also pass the Electricity Security and Affordability Act to protect coal electric utility plants from excessive EPA regulation as well as the Preventing Government Waste and Protecting Coal Mining Jobs in America Act. These measures will make it easier for coal plants to continue operating freeing up more natural gas to heat our homes.

Electric Heat

Approximately 39% of American households rely on electric heat. If this includes your family, you know that prices are up and your February 2014 was an expensive one. Electric prices are higher than they should be in part because Washington regulations make it harder to construct new power plants and are threatening to shut down the ones we have. Electricity in America comes from one of several sources, including coal, wind, nuclear, and natural gas. While America keeps growing, today it can take 5 to 7 years to build a new power plant. In part this is a result of an incredibly slow federal permitting process.

- The House will work to fix this problem by passing the Responsibly and Professional Invigorating Development (RAPID) Act to expedite federal permitting for construction projects – including the 351 proposed coal, wind, nuclear, and natural gas projects identified in a 2011 study -- that will create more abundant energy supplies.

With 39% of our electricity coming from coal generation, proposed regulations on coal threaten to further increase costs, which are up 7% from 2009-2013.

- That is why the House will pass the Electricity Security and Affordability Act to protect coal electric utility plants from excessive EPA regulation as well as the as well as the Preventing Government Waste and Protecting Coal Mining Jobs in America Act to protect coal mining from excessive and unnecessary federal regulation.

Propane

The approximately 5% of American households that heat their home with propane have seen shortages this winter and skyrocketing bills – nearly 70% higher than a year ago – in part because the infrastructure to deliver propane to high-demand areas is insufficient.

- To address the immediate problem we will consider the Home Heating Emergency Assistance Through Transportation (HHEATT) Act of 2014 to make it easier to transport propane to areas with shortages.
- We will also pursue long-term solutions by expediting the process to construct the infrastructure necessary to get propane where it is needed most by passing the Responsibly and Professional Invigorating Development (RAPID) Act.

AN AMERICA THAT WORKS

- Three out of four Americans say they are living paycheck to paycheck. In a cold winter, it gets even harder for a low-income family to get by.
- A lack of infrastructure to effectively move natural gas and EPA regulations on coal power plants are keeping energy prices high. We have solutions.
- 39% of American households rely on electric heat, yet Washington regulations make it harder to construct new power plants and are threatening to shut down the ones we have. We have solutions.
- Homes that use propane for heat have seen prices skyrocket by nearly 70% in just the last year, in part because the infrastructure to deliver propane to high-demand areas is insufficient. We have solutions.